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THE CEA CRITIC

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TWENTIETH ANNUAL MEETING

A near-capacity audience listened with careful attention to a review of the work of the cooperative committee on English studies at the 20th annual CEA meeting, Hotel Statler, New York, on December 28, 1958. Henry Sams, our national president, presided, and speakers were Willard Thorp, Princeton; Edward Gordon, Germantown Friends School; and Albert Marckwardt, U. of Mich.

Willard Thorp described the four three-day meetings of the cooperative committee as among the most exciting experiences of his life. He learned much, he said, and he learned fast. The recurrent question which kept coming before the group was: "What is English as a study?" This question is hard to answer, even on the graduate level.

The two most urgent issues which, Professor Thorp said, haunt him like a nightmare, are first that English is badly diluted — even students themselves no longer read first-rate literature for pleasure — and second that our profession "is coming apart." Do we have a profession? We have

lost a sense of the tradition of English literature and we have lost a sense of joy, he said. It is easy to sell English as a service course, but is this all it can be?

Edward Gordon asked whether English should include things like life adjustment and public speaking. He questioned whether we have adequate tests of accomplishment in our field and asked why we keep teaching the same thing over and over. Why can't we devise a sequential curriculum so that everyone eventually will have a basic knowledge of literature and writing? We must identify the skills in writing and teach them one by one.

Mr. Gordon asked why the concept of individual differences among students was used to lower rather than to raise standards. He outlined the battle for men's minds as a battle between those who write to enslave and those who write to set men free. The training we give students must be such as to open their minds to the second group of writers, not to the first group, he said.

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Honors Work And Other Programs For The Superior Student

(Paper read at the NC-Va CEA fall meeting at Washington and Lee University)

Independent study is the designation applied to plans by which the student assumes an increasing responsibility towards his own education. The university and the college recognize the need of adjusting educational opportunity to superior abilities and at the same time of making maximum use of the existing curriculum. It is necessary to provide able students with the opportunity to move ahead in a chosen field of interest at their own speed, and to free them from the academic lockstep and a rate of academic progress set by the majority.

Two general methods have been and are being used: honors work and other independent study programs. First, let us consider the honors work. The plans for honors often differ rather widely, but there is enough in common to describe a general profile of such arrangements.

1. Eligibility and Application

Students with a minimum quality point ratio of 2.00 are eligible to apply at the end of the sophomore year (Randolph-Macon Woman's College, Connecticut College for Women, Pembroke, Smith). It is sometimes specifically provided that this 2.00 average be maintained throughout the

honors study in both the major field and in courses required for the degree. Swarthmore does not officially set a grade average, but permits honors work to be elected by students of superior ability "whose maturity, interest, and capacity suit them for independent work," also at the end of the sophomore year.

In one instance the student was to have an average of 2.5 in the major subject, 2.00 in general average, and a written evaluation of the student from her instructors (Mary Washington College of the University of Virginia—to departmental honors committee). This evaluation is based upon maturity of interest, tenacity of purpose, scholastic ability, character, and initiative. At Wellesley the credit ratio for eligibility is at least a B minus average during the preceding three semesters (freshman and sophomore years) and high quality of work in the major field. Michigan permits the election of honors at the end of the second year with a B average, qualifying examination, personal interview, and completion of all requirements for the degree. Smith allows election with a B average at the end of the second year; in the University of North Carolina and Radcliffe the student may be eligible with a good depart-

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On November 27, 1958, the National Council of Teachers of English passed a resolution expressing its appreciation to the participating organizations and to the committee members of the Conference on Basic Issues in the Teaching of English for their willingness to meet together to study common problems and to prepare a collective report, and it recommended "that this kind of collective action be continued in the future for the improvement of the profession." Participating organizations were the NCTE, the MLA, the CEA, and the ASA.

"God uses us to help each other so lending our minds out." — Browning

In *The C. E. A. Critic* of October 1958, the Managing Editor asks English teachers to "speak up" so that the "masses who know us not" may come to understand what the humanities mean in American culture.

There is no question in my mind that many of the "masses who know us not" are at the present time students in our professional schools. If we in the humanities do not give these students more than the minimum requirements in English, they will, as far as we are concerned, remain forever the "masses". Everyone knows that the humanities are opposed to the mass mind and the blunted spirit, but not everyone interested in the humanities is willing to do more than say it is a losing battle to try to bring the humanities into close contact with professionalism.

Personally, the subject of "selling" the humanities is of great interest to me, since, for the past three and a half years as assistant professor of English at Boston College, I have been assigned to teach English in our Nursing School, where we offer two courses — Composition and Rhetoric — in two semesters and Criticism of literature in one semester.

The students, all graduate nurses, are what could be called a disparate group, since many of them have been in the nursing profession for many years; while others, quite young, have recently graduated from a three year hospital school. But, unlike many students in non-professional schools, our students do not, in general, view liberal education as "an asinine feast of sour thistles and brambles." In fact, my students requested an additional course in English.

Because of the exigencies of the Curriculum
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THE CEA CRITIC

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lish Association, Inc.

At this time each winter last year's
promising English majors who have gone on
to graduate school have a habit of drop-
ping in to chat with their undergraduate
teachers in order to unburden some of
their misery.

Part of their trouble derives from the
natural difficulty of adjusting to the more
impersonal and scientific atmosphere of
the graduate school. We listen to their
complaints in this area sympathetically and
do our best to build up their morale.

But a major part of the trouble, we can-
not help but feel, springs from the in-
humane and anti-literary atmosphere into
which they have suddenly been plunged—
and, while we do not dare to tell them
so, we are deeply disturbed that the grad-

uate-school world is as it is.

Our gifted students are now forced to
read everything but the primary texts with
which they fell in love under our tutelage
and which are the reason for their going
on to do graduate work. It is vastly more
important now to know the literature about
literature than to know literature itself.

They have moved into a universe in
which publication and research are the only
things that count, and where ill-prepared
teaching is taken for granted. The competi-
tion among the students is relentless and
it is much more important to have the right
contacts and to say the flattering thing
than to be seriously interested in books
for their own sakes. They are loaded down
with research assignments, some of which
have no other purpose than to provide
footnotes for a learned professor's book. A
subtle dishonesty fills the atmosphere which
they breathe.

The returning graduates who drop in to
see us are lads with plenty of fortitude
and stamina, but their spirits are being
broken. Thus it was when we went to
graduate school too, but we had some-
how fondly hoped that the world had
improved. Apparently it has not.

L. E. H.

Beat Generation

The *New York Post* is conducting a sur-
vey to determine what effect, if any the
"Beat Generation" and its prophets —
Jack Kerouac, Kenneth Rexroth, Allen Gins-
berg etc. — are having on our college
campuses. Are any of these authors widely
read, or read at all, at your college? Do
many undergraduates on your campus iden-
tify themselves with the Beat Generation?
If so, in what way?

The *Post* suggests that you contribute a
paragraph or two on this topic, or have
one of your student leaders do so, prefer-
ably the head of the campus literary so-
ciety. Address Alfred G. Arnowitz, *New
York Post*, 76 West Street, New York 6.

For some ten years now it seems that
many of our younger intellectuals have
been making inordinate spoken use of the
word *this*. Though this occurs sometimes
as an adjective, it comes mostly as a pro-
noun and is generally enunciated with a
vigorous hiss. The less coherent the con-
versation the less euphonious this sounds
to a late Victorian ear, especially if it
recurs in nearly every other sentence. In
some esthetic and philosophic discussions
the word *that* is almost never heard any

longer.

This is an interesting phenomenon. So far
I have not noticed examples of the fashion
in the columns of the *Critic* or in other
good writing; so it probably is confined still
to oral use. But *that* is only one person's
opinion, and maybe some who read this
note have seen evidence of the curious
habit in published writing.

How did the habit start? Did this begin
with brilliant refugees who talked broken
English? It might be too that Continental
or Scandinavian women had something to
do with its etiology, though this could
hardly be the reason for its increasing con-
tinuance.

There may be a real and sober psychol-
ogical reason for the seeming fad. The
word *this* is possibly more subjective than
that, and our bright young men of the
beat generation are so finding escape from
the external muddle. *That* may be it.

Can someone help me with this?

Deckard Ritter
Illinois College

Poetic Department

(20th Century Poets Nightmare Depart-
ment)

Rupert brooke the bishop's bridge-work,
It was his lowell plate;
And auden's foot was aiken
From the patchen he gave tate.

"What the hillyer think ya doin'?"
Roared the pegueyed mr pound,
Kicking sandburg in the claudel
Wylie knocked him to the ground.

In deutsch cried out the eberhart,
"Vierecken all der place!"
Wylie cut shapiro's 'spenders
And fielded them in his mase.

Up the campbells were a-cummin,
Not a'fearing of the Fray,
And, masters of the situation,
They quite jarrelled the millay

Now all the torrence are at moss,
And the rabindranath are tagore;
There'll be a nemerov frost winters
'Fore they warren any moore.

Timothy Guiney
Boston College

The man who reads dictionaries



G. MENNEN WILLIAMS
Governor of Michigan, says:

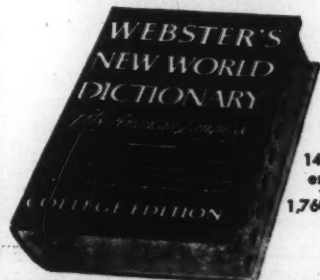
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HELP EACH OTHER (Continued from p. 1)

riculum and the time-limits students set for themselves, it was impossible to offer them any additional courses. Yet — I had "sold" the idea to the students — and I wanted them to become further identified with the humanities.

To this end, I organized what is known as The English Academy of The Boston College School of Nursing. This was almost four years ago, and the Academy grows more active each year. I should like to share with readers of C. E. A. some of the advantages of the Academy.

Each week throughout the school year, we meet and discuss books of lasting significance in much the same way as I conduct my classes in criticism. We emphasize philosophies, literary styles, techniques, and comparisons. In this way, I bring the humanities close to my group and I cement the bond by inviting my colleagues in the English Department at Boston College to discuss their special fields of interest in English with us.

Our first guest, Dr. Bernard Farragher, associate professor of English at Boston College, spoke on "Contemporary Trends in British Literature". Next, Dr. John McAleer, assistant professor of English at the Graduate School of Boston College, gave a talk on "Ideas of Good and Evil in American Literature". This correlated with my course in criticism, for at that time I was presenting the problem of evil in the English classics. Dr. Richard Malaney spoke to us on "Graham Greene and the Slough of Despond", when I was introducing Greene in my work in criticism. Dr. Leonard Casper discussed with Academy members "Recent Developments in Philippine Literature." Dr. Richard Hughes reviewed literary masterpieces of technique and craftsmanship from the standpoint of theatrical art.

At the present time, I have a list of speakers in the humanities from Boston College ready and generously willing to give scholarly talks to the Academy. I always keep in mind the fact that the student in a professional school, involved as she is in her professional duties, is still entitled to know more of the "wide and luminous view" of the humanities, especially when she reaches out for more of the liberalizing studies.

Because of the outstanding success of the English Academy, I have no doubt that similar activities in other professional groups could be started by those who are truly interested in a meeting of minds.

Those of us at Boston College intensely concerned with the humanities are not merely "speaking out"; we are, in a very real sense, "lending our minds out".

Clara M. Siggins
Boston College

HONORS WORK (Continued from p. 1)

mental record (in some Wellesley departments she must have two courses in the department in addition to her regular curriculum offering). Radcliffe offers tutoring to sophomores who wish to be candidates for honors in fields of concentration. Washington and Lee University requires a B average for the two semesters preceding and demonstrated special competence in his field.

2. Work Elected

As indicated above, many institutions permit the honors work to begin in the junior year. Randolph-Macon permits the election of 6-12 hours (12 hours if begun in the junior year), and the Wellesley program begins with independent investigation in the summer preceding the junior year. Other colleges allow honors only in the senior year: Mary Washington College, Washington and Lee. Wellesley requires at least 12 hours for the honors degree, with a minimum of 6 hours in the junior year and from 3-12 hours during the senior year. Bowdoin permits the student to be released from no more than 4 courses in 3 semesters; Pembroke permits the omission of no more than 2 distribution courses in the election of honors.

As might be expected, the greatest freedom from the formal program of the upper two years is at Swarthmore: the student electing to read for honors may concentrate upon a closely integrated field of study limited to two subjects each semester (4 semesters in the major field and two each in the two minor ones).

3. Nature of Honors Study

In general honors study is usually confined to a special field of investigation under departmental supervision, customarily in place of one or two courses, with the completion of a thesis and often an oral examination upon the thesis. The work is conducted by seminars and/or weekly conferences. Students may broaden this experience by working in two departments, such as in literature and fine arts (Wellesley, Randolph-Macon), or by honors in a special field cutting across departmental lines, unified by the subject for investigation, and quite distinct from departmental honors.

In the instance of interdepartmental honors, as at Randolph-Macon, the work is supervised by members of the faculty from each department in consultation with each other. Certain institutions such as Sweet Briar and Pembroke prefer to give the honors study a much wider scope than

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HONORS WORK (Continued from p. 3)

research in a particular project or topic. At Yale students in the last two years are eligible for participation in a new inter-departmental Honors Program which will emphasize seminars, a syllabus of required reading, and a set of comprehensive examinations rather than formal courses. The honors program at Yale had been heretofore concentrated within departments, and had been based upon the formal course structure.

The thesis requirement seems to be a fairly general one (Radcliffe, Wellesley, Goucher, Washington and Lee, Randolph-Macon). Swarthmore seems to provide either an independent project leading to a thesis or seminars of about 7 students each leading to examinations in fields studied. The date for the submission of the thesis is usually fixed (for example, Washington and Lee, April 1, Wells, by April 30, Connecticut College, two weeks before the comprehensive examination.)

4. Examinations

There are in general two approaches:

1. Students must take the comprehensive examinations for seniors (if required of majors) in addition to writing a thesis and taking an oral examination on that (Randolph-Macon). At Washington and Lee the

candidate for honors must achieve distinction in the comprehensive examination.

2. In place of the required written general or comprehensive examination for all seniors, the honors student is required to take another examination which may be oral or written or both (Wellesley, Sweet Briar, Wells). At Swarthmore this becomes a 3 hour paper in each of the seminars taken, set by outside examiners who read these papers and then administer an oral examination. Sweet Briar also uses outside examiners.

5. Administration of Honors Work

In general the honors work is administered by a faculty committee, appointive (Randolph-Macon) or elected by the faculty (Mary Washington College), sometimes in cooperation with a departmental honors committee. The authority for supervision by this committee varies with the particular college or university: in some the department wholly determines the plans of the candidate; in others the plans must be approved by the faculty committee (such as the Honors Council and Director of Programs at Pembroke, Curriculum Committee at Wellesley, or Committee on Honors Plan of Study, Sweet Briar, which invites the student to become a candidate following recommendation by the department.) In some colleges the committee keeps close supervision over the honors examinations by appointing a member to sit in (Mary Washington College), or by reading the examinations (Wells Honor Commission).

6. Recognition of Honors Work

This recognition varies from the simple "With Honors in English" (Randolph-Macon) to more complex acknowledgments at Wellesley and Bowdoin. At Wellesley high honors are given to the honor candidate who distinguishes herself in independent work and final examinations and who had a grade of B plus or better, and Honors to the candidate who achieved a B or higher. Bowdoin awards its degree with departmental honors, high honors, highest honors.

Let us turn now from Honors Study and consider, secondly, plans for superior students other than Honors.

1. Emphasis upon independent work within the conventional framework of departmental courses (Vassar, the Wellesley "long papers").

2. Courses and special provisions for research and independent study. Three illustrations of such provisions may be cited here. a. At Goucher a student may substitute for a regular course a special research project during her junior or senior year. This may be elected either to fulfill a particular need or interest of the individual or as part of an honors plan. It may be begun without thought of turning it into an honors plan, since Goucher does not require independent research for the honors degree.

b. The course known as "350" at Welles-

ley entitled "Research and independent study." Any department may present in this course either directed honors study, field work, or independent reading over an area wider in range and interest than the student usually elects.

c. At Vassar, where there is no Honors Program, a student with a 2.5 credit ratio may apply for permission to do independent work to the Committee on Privilege in Election. This work must be done under the direction of any department included in her Related Studies Program. The plan of study may be reading and examination, a paper, or a project. All departments of Vassar require papers or projects or some individual independent work of senior majors.

3. Scholars of the House Program. a. Michigan State Honors College for students with a B plus average. Students have all requirements waived except number of hours required for graduation, and are assigned to advisors who plan flexible program (such as credit for courses by passing an examination, and waving prerequisites for advanced courses).

b. Since 1956 a few scholars at Harvard (16 in 1956) are admitted to the Advanced Standing Program: expanded tutorial, private individual research, admission to graduate studies.

c. Scholars of the House at Yale, who are given entire freedom from formal requirements in the last two years.

d. Other experiments such as begun in 1955-56 at North Carolina: provision of higher educational levels for gifted freshmen of high intellectual calibre, who completed the advanced academic program of four courses (25 in 1955-56).

John P. Kirby

Randolph-Macon Woman's College

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20th ANNUAL MEETING (Continued from p. 1)

Albert Marckwardt described the cooperative program as the beginning of an attempt to do for English what the MLA foreign language program had done for the foreign languages. Our problem is not small enrollments but lack of a central program which will really present our cultural heritage to the student. In some areas of our discipline we have rigid traditionalism and in other areas wild experimentation.

Two things which we badly need, Professor Marckwardt said, are improved communications and a sense of direction. We must recapture the spirit of professional unity which our profession had for a short period at an early stage of its development. The cooperative conference listed nearly a hundred issues which must be studied and resolved.

During a lively discussion period which followed Professor Marckwardt said that the conferees all recognized the importance of a strong subject-matter training for the teacher, but no one would deny that some teaching methods must also be learned. No agreement was reached, however, as to what agencies should carry on the teacher training.

In response to a question, Edward Gordon described the pattern approach to grammar as a great advance but stated that it is hard to get high school students to see that patterns are important. He also said that the cooperative conference should lead to a whole series of regional conferences between high school and college English teachers. He suggested that Colleges invite local school teachers in for briefing sessions on contemporary critical methods, specific literary works, etc. There should be a state official to deal specifically with English teaching.

Professor Marckwardt stated his belief that the cooperative conference should lead to a statement of qualifications for English teachers. Accreditating associations should cooperate.

In concluding the discussion, Willard Thorp pointed out that English is suffering from serious competition from psychology, economics, and other fields in its attempt to establish a very different image of man from theirs. Literary criticism has already turned into a jargon learned from other fields. Scholarly papers are written in other terms than those of the man of letters. We are in danger of losing our

One hundred and seven members of MCEA, representing thirty institutions, attended the fall 1958 meeting at Michigan State University on November 8. The membership divided to attend three concurrent programs. John Street (MSU) chaired a discussion of "Linguistics in Freshman Composition." James Downer (UM) was the speaker. John Timmerman (Calvin College) chaired a panel discussion of "The Teaching of Great Books" in which Elisabeth Noel (Aquinas) and Sister Thomas Aquinas (Marygrove) also spoke. Ralph Miller (WMU) chaired a discussion of Advanced Composition with Emilie Newcomb (WSU) speaking.

At the business session announcement

was made of the first edition of the new **Michigan CEA Newsletter**. Accreditation and certification problems were discussed. A motion was enthusiastically carried to send a telegram to the producers of "Playhouse 90" protesting their use of the title "Heart of Darkness." A motion was carried to include two-year colleges in the investigation of freshman composition teaching loads for a report to be made in the spring of 1959 (committee chaired by William Harris, HPJC). Marvin Felheim (UM) reported in light and serious vein on "The Shakespeare Institute: Facts and Observations."

Margaret A. Dempster
HFCC, Dearborn

SUMMARY OF "SOME APPLICATIONS OF LONG RANGE PRACTICAL OBJECTIVES IN ADVANCED COMPOSITION COURSES"

Two infrequently discussed problems need solution in advanced composition courses which offer training in general or professional expository writing. Long range objectives in such courses demand the cultivation of qualities that students in many different fields will need to use readily in communicating ideas and information to persons who will read to become enlightened and informed. However, these students have been conditioned by their college courses to write largely for an audience that knows what they should say before they say it. Secondly, such students are rarely aware of the means available for fluent composition of first drafts, or of effective techniques of revision.

Two methods of attack on these problems are proposed. The first calls for assignment of papers on subjects about which discipline. We must stand by the great authors whose image of man we must continue to interpret and present.

At the annual CEA banquet, attended by nearly one hundred, Max Goldberg announced the outcome of the election; Henry Sams, retiring national president, bade us farewell; and our new national president, John Ciardi, gave a stirring speech providing us with a challenge for the years to come. This speech will be published in an early issue of *The Critic*. Elected were John Ciardi, president; Donald J. Lloyd, first vice-president; Harry T. Moore, second vice-president; for directors, Henry Sams, Charles M. Clark, Thomas Marshall, Nathan Starr, Marvin Perry.

L. E. H.

the student is responsible for knowing more than his English instructor knows. The result is a realistic approach to communication, with the by-product of a stimulating intellectual *esprit de corps* developed by consultation regarding content with other faculty and students. The second method provides practice in dictation of first drafts. The student thus not only experiences the realities of composing in the professional and business world, but more importantly acquires a vivid sense of the necessity for solving in detail problems

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of organization, and often discovers an articulateness inhibited on paper for years. Training in revision of transcriptions of dictated first drafts provides a fresh and adult approach to evaluation and improvement of the student's writing.

Emilie A. Newcomb
Wayne State University

PANEL DISCUSSION ON THE TEACHING OF GREAT BOOKS

Since the study of great books unites in an illuminative way past, present and future, since it serves as a civilizing nexus in an age of cultural atomism, and since it presents the student with crucial and inescapable philosophical options, it is a matter of importance that it be conducted with maximum efficiency. A few suggestions on teaching great books may cause profitable exchange of opinion.

Such teaching aims at understanding, appreciation, and critical evaluation, both literary and philosophical. To these ends literary history, linguistic studies textual scholarship, and impressionistic enthusiasm are contributive and secondary. Understanding involves imaginative, emotional, and intellectual identification with the objective meaning of masterpieces on their own terms. Since so many classics deal with the past, the student must be taught to divest himself, at least partially, of his

present mind. He must learn to assume a past mind. The teacher must, furthermore, not allow his principles of final critical evaluation to prejudice his own reading. He must hold his humanist, Christian, or Freudian criteria in abeyance till he has understood the work on the author's terms.

Appreciation recognizes the Coleridgean dictum that a poem has as its immediate object pleasure, whatever the ultimate objects may be. Bored, disgusted, or hostile students do not appreciate great works of literary art. Paradigms can be pounded even into wooden heads, but poems cannot. Appreciation uses the study of artistic process to share the joy of masterpiece. All the relevant facets of artistic competence are demonstrated hopefully to culminate in the student's conviction that he has encountered and appropriated a consummate fusion of meaning and form—experience, objectified, clarified, and superbly organized. He wins such appreciation only through close, disciplined reading.

The teacher should not dodge the thorny task of critical and philosophical judgment. After being led into the meaning and excellence of a classic, the student should be excited to critical evaluation. He should be helped to see how the work counts, not through a parade of portentous critical dicta, but through personal conviction. Such criticism is admittedly personal, but if presented with intelligence, honesty, and taste will prove contagiously stimulating.

Literature may be considered significant verbal form. The formal problem concerns itself with the adequacy of the medium, with the deftness of process. Form as the right words is always involved in some level of meaning whether merely sensuous as in an imagistic poem, or moral, intellectual, spiritual, or on all levels at once. As the formal elements become richer, denser, and increasingly intricate, the formal value increases; therefore *Hamlet* is immeasurably richer than *Snowbound*. But a work of art is always written by the whole man, mind and heart, and affects the total personality of the reader and, therefore, inevitably involves moral and philosophical values. A classic is a vision or life and implies religious perspectives. Consequently, one's personal commitment as to the nature of reality enters into the final evaluation. The humanist, the naturalist, and the Christian will, indeed, bring differing criteria to bear, but none it seems to me,

should be satisfied with a chill, spectatorial attitude. I would not call such final evaluation sectarian but human, for a philosophically unexamined book is as pointless as a philosophically unexamined life.

John Timmerman
Calvin College

SUMMARY OF REMARKS ON PARADISE LOST

No defense is needed for an English Teacher's decision to place *Paradise Lost* in the category of works to be included in a Great Works Course. Though stamped with the individuality of Milton, it is one with all mankind, a part of all life and thought. As such, it is relevant to the intellectual and spiritual needs of students; yet it is at the same time "a literature of power" and not merely a storehouse of information.

The teacher, however, finding a mystical potency in great literature, and welcoming the effect on his mind of a passage read from *Paradise Lost*, may not assume that his students will respond favorably and

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completely when introduced to the same work. The influence of great works is not at all uniform in quality or in kind. *Paradise Lost* has much to contribute even in a brief acquaintance. One hopes that a fair presentation will produce a fair impression of the poet and encourage further study of his work, but our chief concern should be, in the little time available, to allow the poem to produce its own effects on the students.

Since the study of *Paradise Lost* is probably the only introduction to Milton that

many students will get, let me make three recommendations which, if followed, will serve to enrich the teaching of the epic.

1. *Paradise Lost* will take on added significance if presented in the context of Milton's literary career. It should be prefaced by an account of his poetic development in the earlier period; of his recourse to prose in his attempt to create a society capable of producing a great poet; of the circumstances which furnished the subject matter of his prose gradually compelling him to face the problem of the regeneration of society in terms of two individuals in a garden. His great Christian Utopia Milton brings to focus in the consciences of Adam and Eve with Eden as the battle-ground of the forces of good and evil. Such an introduction will serve to acquaint the students with an understanding of the breadth and depth of Milton's total output.

2. If time does not permit the reading of the entire text of *Paradise Lost*, I suggest a reading of the skeleton in the argument prefixed to the book in order to ensure right direction and emphasis. In choosing sections for intensive study, let us select those sections most nearly representative of the whole. Here the title furnishes the clue: the losing of Paradise. Book IX concerns itself with the main agents engaged in the main action in the main setting. Distortions of plot, meaning, emphasis, in short, all manner of consequent misinterpretations result from the reading of Books I, II which are commonly given in isolation in anthologies. To underscore the theme and direction of the whole, I would follow Book IX with selections from the opening lines of Book I and the closing passages of Book XII; to show how God and Satan are involved in the central action, the council scenes in Books II, III; to clarify the enormity of and reason for the loss, the description of Eden in Book IV; to complete the tragic aftermath, the account of the agony of the fallen pair in Book X.

3. Examine Milton's poetic technique in terms of his own conviction: "True musical delight consists only in apt numbers, fit quantites of syllables and sense variously drawn out from one verse to another". We cannot expect the students to enter fully into the high-voltage moods of Milton's poetry and make each their own from beginning to end. We should guide appreciation to choice passages.

Sister Thomas Aquinas
Marygrove College

TO CUT AND PASTE, OR?

In 1952 I wrote a manual for Freshman English. It was a mimeographed affair of one hundred and twenty-four pages and had to be collated by neighbors and friends, in fact collated in a neighbor's house, after I found out what small children could do to one hundred and twenty-four mimeographed pages marked Number 1, another one hundred and twenty-four marked Number 2, and so on up to page 124.

I don't think my hospitable neighbors quite knew what all these stacks of paper would do to their house either, for it shortly began to resemble the packaging room of R. H. Macy's at Christmas time, particularly after a dozen friends arrived to pick up pages and put them into hard, black folders to make a book. We would, however, thoughtfully remove several stacks from at least one bed before we'd leave for the night. The process must have continued for ten nights or more and became more disorganized as friends would clamor, "Where's page 75? Page 43 has run out. You can't read page 88; it's smudged!" And so forth.

To insure no slackening off of ardor, and to make certain of the crew's return the following evening, I used most of the food budget for Budweiser. Even so, when the last of the pages were cleared away and the house looked somewhat more tidy than the living room does on a Christmas afternoon, several hundred respectable-looking books were ready to be rushed to the bookstore to meet the September deadline.

Six years and two revisions later, the books arrived from the printer's — three weeks late; It wasn't the printer's fault. It was the striving after perfection.

"This time," said I, "we'll have the perfect book, even to every dot and dash that will insure consistency."

So I worked with a professional proof-reader, a good friend of mine, and all
(Please turn To p. 8)

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by

Merrill B. Sherman

Write for free examination
copy to Department of English,
Hillyer College of the University
of Hartford, Hartford,
Connecticut.

(Continued from p. 7)

summer long copy went back and forth between Boston and Hartford, even after the bookstore deadline — to insure that perfect book.

Then came the nightmare of waiting for delivery. There was at least one real nightmare when I dreamed that the book arrived in the shape of a rectangle three inches wide and three feet long, with half the title on the front and the rest on the back, printed in a sort of green ink that blurred when you tried to read it.

The day did arrive when a special delivery package containing the advance copy was handed to me during a committee meeting. I squirmed and fidgeted waiting for the meeting to end, so that I might enjoy that delicious first peek alone.

After that initial glimpse, I fairly glowed. But what few moments of elation were allowed me! Some thirty minutes later, I looked into the bookstore and there was a pile of cartons from the printer, already opened.

"The cartons got wet in transit," explained the manager, "so we thought we'd better open them. And what about this first sentence in the theme? Is it consistent?"

"What can he mean?" I thought to myself. "Of course it's consistent! We've read it a hundred times!"

I looked at the copy. "You're right, Harry," I said. "That's one the proofreader missed." I turned tail and left the room. The ceiling began to close in.

I stood it all the afternoon and then could hold out for silence no longer, so I started with our young doctor of philosophy from Yale.

"Frank," I said, "the first error has shown up already, before we've even started to teach the book — discovered by someone not even in the department. Read this sentence."

He did so. "I don't see anything wrong," he replied.

"All right," I said, "I'll try Paul."

Paul is our really critical-eyed eighteenth century scholar from Wesleyan.

His reply was the same. "O.K., fellows," I said. "Look at this:"

If you have been talking English all your lives, have gone through grammar school, high school, and have been admitted to college, you must have had reasonable success in making yourself understood in both speaking and writing.

Of course, you see right away that the bookstore manager was just being consis-

tent, as a good bookstore manager should be, and thought that *lives* ought to be *life*, or *yourself* be *yourselves*.

And so it was in the original copy until the day my friend, the professional proofreader, and I decided that the theme was directed to the individual, so that it ought to be *yourself*. And neither one of us ever thought about *lives* and perhaps never would have again if it hadn't been for Harry.

The other errors, of course, will appear deep in the text, so no use worrying about

them.

But what to do? Cut and paste next summer? My wife, of course, I mean. There'll be only a few thousand books left by then.

What is the answer to my dilemma?

Ah, it seems to me, there was the hint of some moral about perfection to be drawn, but I've given that idea up — for ever.

Merrill B. Sherman
University of Hartford

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